

Your 10-Point Plan for Safe Liftgate Use

Hydraulic liftgates can save commercial truck drivers time and labor—but only when they’re used properly. When used carelessly or improperly, liftgates can cause amputations and other serious injuries to drivers and even to innocent bystanders. Liftgate safety starts with some commonsense advice. Use this 10-point plan for safe liftgate use:

- 1. Read the labels.** Most liftgates will include decals with instructions and warnings. Read all decals prior to operating any liftgate.
- 2. Check the liftgate.** Look for any visible damage. If you find damage, don’t operate the liftgate. Instead, report the damage to your fleet manager. Also, make sure the liftgate platform isn’t wet, icy or slippery.
- 3. Check the area below the liftgate.** Make sure it’s clear from obstacles and debris so it will open properly.
- 4. Know how much the liftgate can handle.** Look for the rated load capacity on the safety decals—and don’t exceed that weight limit.
- 5. Do one thing at a time.** Never operate the control switch on the hydraulic liftgate while unfolding the platform. Lower the liftgate first and then unfold the platform after it touches the ground. When stowing the liftgate, fold the platform first and then raise the platform. For optimal safety, stand to one side while using the control switch.
- 6. Watch your fingers.** Keep all body parts clear of “pinch points”—anyplace where a hand, foot, arm, leg or other body part could get caught by the liftgate while in motion. Pay close attention to areas where the liftgate and the truck meet. And don’t forget the area below the liftgate.



- 7. Secure your load.** Don’t pile up items onto the hydraulic liftgate. It’s too easy for stacked boxes to tip over and onto the ground—or onto a person—if the load is improperly balanced. If you must stack cargo, secure it with straps to prevent tipping. If you’re hauling cargo with wheels, chock all wheels so the cargo doesn’t roll off the liftgate.
- 8. Keep the forklift on the pavement.** Never use a forklift on a liftgate.
- 9. Ask for help.** Know how much freight you can safely handle loading and unloading, and ask for assistance from another qualified person if you need help.
- 10. Put the liftgate away.** Never drive a truck with the liftgate down. Stow it properly based on the manufacturer’s instructions.